

Washington, DC-Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez (TX-23) today supported for HR 2, the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) Reauthorization bill. This bipartisan bill renews and improves SCHIP, providing health care coverage for 11 million children - preserving coverage for the 7 million children currently covered by SCHIP and extending coverage to 4 million uninsured children who are currently eligible for, but not enrolled in, SCHIP and Medicaid. The bill passed the House today by a bipartisan vote of 289-139.

"Covering children with health insurance is critical to our communities," said Rodriguez. "When children, through no fault of their own, can't get health care it is the moral thing to do to protect them so that they may have the life they deserve."

Covering more eligible children is not only the right thing to do - it's also much more cost-effective for taxpayers than using the emergency room as a primary care provider. In addition, a healthy child is better prepared for learning and success.

SCHIP was created in 1997 to provide health care coverage for children in families that earn too much to qualify for Medicaid, but not enough to afford private insurance, and has proved a successful and cost-effective program for providing health care.

The bill is fully paid-for - increasing the tobacco tax by 61 cents and also achieving savings by imposing restrictions on self-referral to physician-owned hospitals.